

# The White-throated Kingfisher (Halcyon smyrnensis) in Northern India

The White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) is widely distributed in southern Asia (King and Dickman, 1985). It appears to prefer open and semi-open habitats, and it is common in areas, unlike much of West Malaysia (Gamble, 1955). It has been suggested, however, to be absent from Sumatra (Delacour, 1947; Gurnell, 1949; Peters, —; Van Steenis, 1977). The supposition is based on

is quite considerable.

Given the lack of earlier records, the population may be assumed to be the result of a recent invasion. There is no evidence to indicate a precise date, but Mr. and Mrs. Smith found the birds in the plantation in 1970, while Van Strien failed to see them during an excursion to the area in 1969 and 1971 (pers. commun.).

Invaders may be successful in occupying the area as the island's "recent" native, often immigrant birds, the Little Whistling-Teal, *Spatula discors*, and the Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, have been reported in substantial numbers. Now the forest is being cleared at a rapid rate by the spread of both subsistence farming and commercial plantations. While the other resident kingfishers of the island (with the possible exception of the Alcedo) seem to be able to settle in open areas, the Halcyon has not increased in numbers. Thus, the small night bird Halcyon is probably facing an environment that was never favourable and probably has been but not

replaced in the occupied area. At the present point of view, the Halcyon is probably declining in numbers. It is not enough to say that the numbers have now fallen to 100, we must see if they continue to drop.

The description of the new area which will be a major ecological shift by the year 2000.

The invasion probably started in 1969 and will continue to decline. The invasion is probably due to a long life span of the Halcyon and long stays from captivity.

Note: 8:10 A.M.

Capturing

Oct. 14th.

A hornbill just flew by (looked like the black one) ~~and~~ over the houses (betw. front row + pump). Roller that was on *coquiccho* chased it, vocalizing loudly. Did not attack it, just flew behind and over it abt. 2 mts. distant. Hornbill did not react but went on flying non-stop, (without gliding). Roller chased it just beyond the houses and turned back to its perch, without vocalizing. Both birds were fairly high.

Vote 9:05 A.M.

Three rollers on perch; sitting quietly

*Roller*"Bluebell



Bird ② nudged ①; looked like grooming, but bird ① had to jump to position b; stayed there while ② looked down. Then ① went hopping around to position c and attacked bird ③. Bird ③ retaliated and both flew off chasing each other. Shortly after, bird ② flew off in same direction. Happened fairly fast. Ten mts. later had not returned.



7:22 - one bird in esmeal house (furthest off)

7:07 - gone; scared off by ~~a~~ a man.

7:25 - no birds still (from 7:07); not in beach either

7:45 - still no birds

7:55 - one bird moved in, same place;  
flew from nearby palm on same  
side. (At 8:00 workers start arriving)

8:02 - bird same place; another flew in direction of beach

8:05 - bird still there.

8:15 - single bird is gone.

8:30 - no birds; the people are not working  
near.

8:45 - one roller on nearby palm

Bluebellis. Annex Hotel Club. Oct. 15, 1976.

Casamance, Senegal

(450, 22) and which the author

had no time to examine, the

following table is given.

It is to be observed that the

table is not complete, as

the author has not had time

## General Comments on Kingfishers

Basic Repertoire of sounds: Single - Doublet, Triplet, Quadruplet) - Chatter (and Twitters, Yelps, and perhaps Whistles) - Rattles

Does this Basic Repertoire differ from that of Coracines?

Halcyon spp. all (?) have long triple (and double?) notes

Halcyon is the most Coracine-like Kingfisher

H. senegalensis is more like sympnetes, including the trill and trill-blues.

The relatively pale birds "Whistles" of some Halcyon spp. are interesting. Is this quality an adaptation to forest conditions? If so, how?

What is the significance of the fact that sympnetes and senegalensis look similar but sound very different? Is this a "race" adaptation?

The 2 most gregarious of "typical" Kingfishers, Coracias and Coracina cyanogaster, show no "chiff" - the "trill" is missing. Is this due to "de-nitrification" in Coracias? Is it the result of a territoriality? Or is it because the birds are gregarious, and therefore can rely upon inter-tutor interactions with other birds? More likely and more likely is the result of more social bonding. There is also, of course, a difference in calling methods.

Phoeniculus purpureus would seem to fit into this roller-hummingbird scheme very well. (Perhaps even parallel or convergent to Agelaius and Amazilia?)

Is the absence of song in Agelaius functionally related to the development of several dives/plumbeous color? P.P?

Doubtless the generally bright coloration of Agelaius is correlated with hole-nesting. (And migration? Hunting?)

Halcyon spp. are improved Coracias; 82.

Increased terrestriality probably has evolved several times in the genus Halcyon, 86.

Migratory and sedentary Halcyon may have different pairing strategies; 87.

No jabbing during fights; 149.

# RIJKSMUSEUM VAN NATUURLIJKE HISTORIE

RAAMSTEEG 2, LEIDEN, NEDERLAND — TELEFOON 071-14 38 44

CORRESPONDENTIE-ADRES: POSTBUS 9517, 2300 RA LEIDEN

*Coraciiformes*

Dr. M. H. Moynihan  
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute  
Box 2072  
Balboa  
Panama Kanaal Zone

Leiden, June 12th 1979.

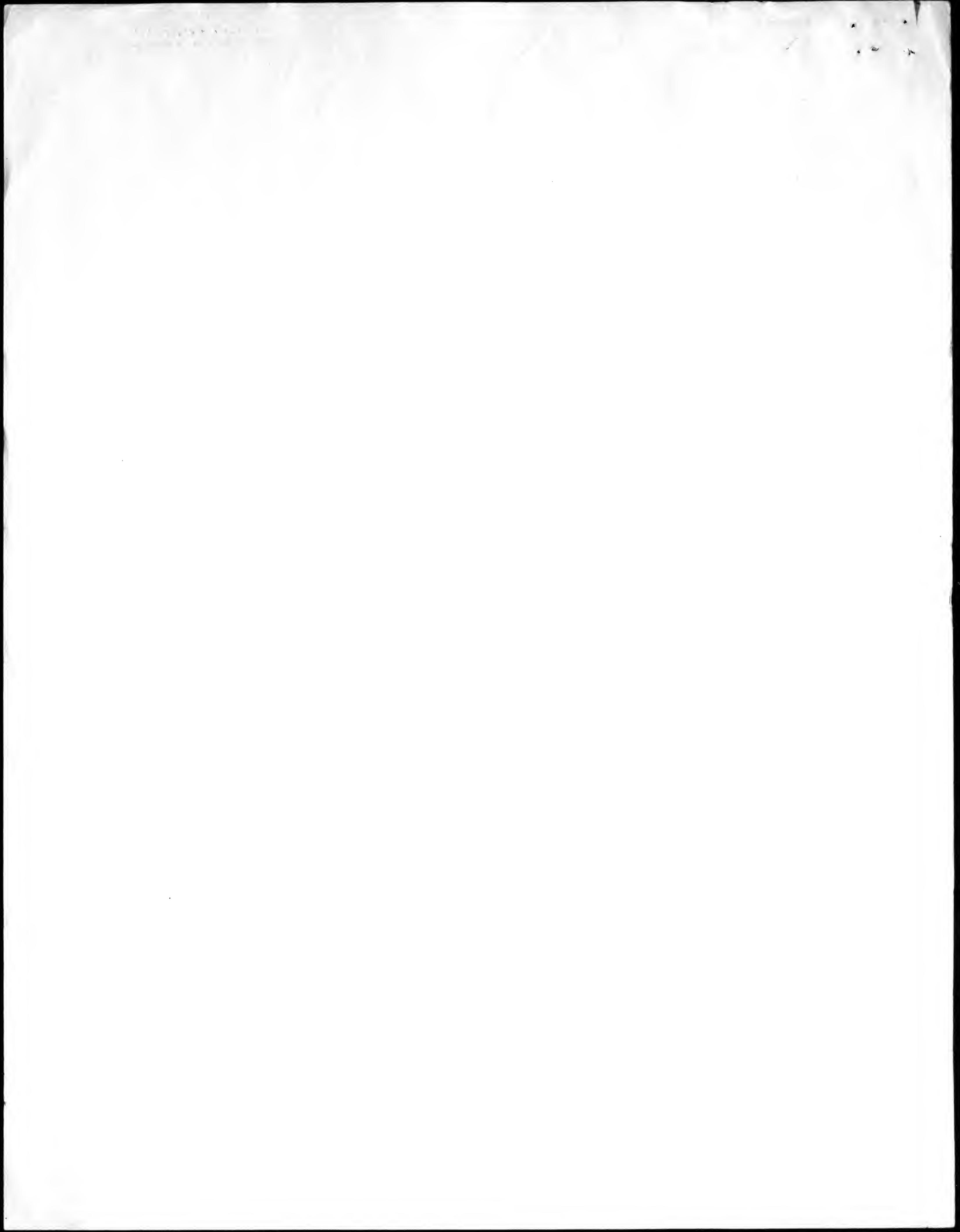
Dear Dr. Moynihan,

There is very little I can tell you about Halcyon smyrnensis in addition to the information contained in my last letter, but it seems indeed clear to me that in both Sumatra and Java the species is a new colonist.

In the large collections made in Deli in the early years of this century (1912-1915) by Dr. F.L. de Bussy (published 1919, by de Beaufort & de Bussy, *Bijdr. Dierk.* 21: 229-276; more unpublished material in our collection) there is no mention of H. smyrnensis, although nine species of Alcedinidae were collected. Yet, Baron van Lynden, Thirty years later, called it the commonest kingfisher in the same region. Surely this indicates, yes practically proves, recent colonization.

In the article mentioned above, de Bussy makes an interesting remark in the discussion of H. chloris, of which I give here a free translation: "This species is very common everywhere along the coast.... for many years I have never seen it far from the coast, such in strong contrast to its behaviour in Java, where for example near Buitenzorg, not to mention many other places, it is numerous. In 1915, however, to my surprise, I discovered it in the Highlands in the neighbourhood of Kaban Djahé, hence far into the interior. This distribution is peculiar as the species does not appear to occur in the intervening country". From this it would appear that in the Bussy's time H. chloris did not occur in the cultivated lowlands (where indeed it is common in Java). This may be connected with the fact that colonization of Deli by tobacco planters began only about 1860 or 1870, in what previously was heavy forest. Open cultivated country must have been a new habitat in Deli, that in the Bussy's time had not yet been colonized by H. chloris, and this may possibly have given H. smyrnensis its opportunity. You will realize that this is only speculation, as I have no personal experience in Deli. Did you see H. chloris there?

West Java is ornithologically so well-known, that I am sure that if H. smyrnensis ever occurred there as more than a rare straggler, it would have been recorded. Even now there is only this single case of breeding known so that the species can hardly be said to be established in Java. Its appearance is even more recent than in Sumatra. In this case the explanation suggested above for Sumatra, that there was an open niche available, is invalid as in Java H. chloris is common in cultivated country.



# RIJKSMUSEUM VAN NATUURLIJKE HISTORIE

RAAMSTEEG 2, LEIDEN, NEDERLAND — TELEFOON 071-14 38 44

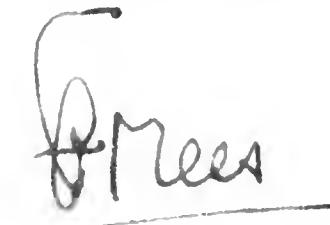
CORRESPONDENTIE-ADRES: POSTBUS 9517, 2300 RA LEIDEN

- 2 -

Leiden,

Conclusion: H. smyrnensis colonized eastern Sumatra (Deli) about sixty years ago, following forest clearing and other human activities. In Java there is even now no evidence that it has actually settled and further developments must be awaited. You could ask Wells how the species H. chloris and H. smyrnensis interact in Malaya.

Yours sincerely,



G. F. Mees

May 18, 1979

Dr. G.F. Mees  
Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke  
Historie  
Raamsteeg 2  
Postbus 9517, 2300 RA  
Leiden, Nederland

Dear Dr. Mees:

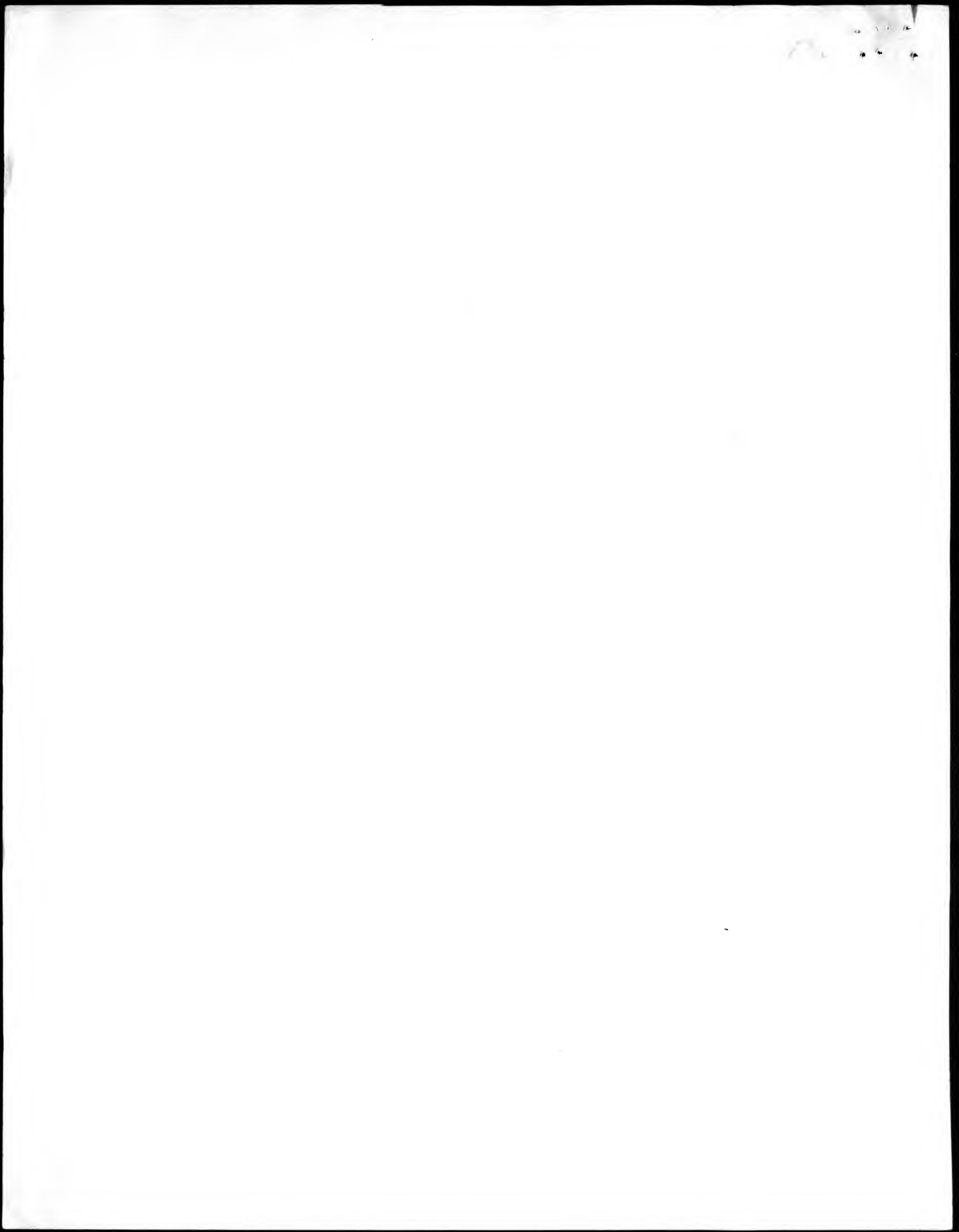
Thank you for your letter of May 2nd with the information on Halcyon smyrnensis in Sumatra and Java. It was very helpful indeed.

One of the subjects in which I am ~~most~~ interested is competition among species (with all the behavioral interactions involved). I wonder, therefore, how the relations between smyrnensis and other Halcyon kingfishers, especially chloris, will eventually evolve (or settle down) in Sumatra. In this context, it would be useful to know if the Sumatran smyrnensis are relatively recent invaders or a relict of some earlier, Pleistocene or post-Pleistocene, expansion. Do you know of any data that would be relevant to this question?

Yours sincerely,

*15/*  
Martin H. Moynihan  
Senior Scientist

Put eng. letter to Dr. M



## 2. *Leucosphaera - Malvaceae*

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1900 Torquay. The Kingfisher commonly seen in Pala.  
1900. 25. 00. ~~1900-1901~~ Middle rock, 26. 11., deep broken surface.

“The ‘Screen’ is the way to protect the family, to keep the children safe from the outside world.”

Departures All islands in the Palau Archipelago are connected by a network of ferries, including the main island of Koror, the island of Babeldaob, Peleliu, Angaur, Ngereke, and Tobi. Ferries also connect the islands of Koror, Peleliu, Angaur, Ngereke, and Tobi to the Philippines, specifically to the island of Palawan, and to the island of Guam in the Pacific.

the 1970s, V. P. Tikhonov, G. N. Kostylev, V. V. Gerasimov, and others, high-resolution seismic surveys in a series of long, narrow linear profiles (called a "gutter") showed that the eastern part of the basin contains a series of long, narrow linear depressions (valleys) in the bottom, 400–1,000 m long and 100–200 m wide, which are filled with thick layers of fine-grained sediments. The mean thickness of these layers is 10–20 m. The eastern part of the basin is characterized by the presence of a series of narrow, elongated depressions (valleys) in the bottom, 400–1,000 m long and 100–200 m wide, which are filled with thick layers of fine-grained sediments. The mean thickness of these layers is 10–20 m.

the Kingfisher. The Kingfisher is a small bird, about 10 inches long, with a long, pointed beak, and a crest of feathers on its head. It has a blue and black plumage, with a white patch on its wing. The Kingfisher is a skillful fisherman, and it can catch fish by diving into the water and striking them with its beak. It also eats insects, small fish, shrimp, crabs, and other organisms. In the Kingfisher's beak, there is a sharp hook, which it uses to catch its prey. The Kingfisher is a very clever bird, and it is able to catch many different types of fish, including trout, salmon, and bass. It is also known for its ability to fly long distances, and it has been seen flying over 100 miles in a single day.

1. Long sandstone



